



300

Programming and Project Definition Phase

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Web site.*

300.01 Introduction

Part 300 covers the evolution of transportation plans from the conceptual stage of needs and service objectives as identified in Washington's Transportation Plan (WTP), through statewide prioritizing, to project definition by WSDOT divisions and regional offices, and development of the biennial budget proposal to the legislature.

The Olympia Service Center (OSC) is responsible for developing six-year investment programs for preservation and improvement programs identified in the WTP. The six-year programs identify specific projects for the next biennium and an investment plan for the remaining four years. The programs are developed through a process of needs analysis, evaluation of alternatives, tradeoffs, and cost/benefit analysis to rank projects to be included in the biennial budget. Six-year programs are done concurrently with development of the three-year Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) for surface transportation projects required under federal legislation (TEA-21).

During this phase, regional offices are responsible for defining specific projects that address deficiencies identified in the six-year program. For each proposed project, a draft project summary is prepared which identifies the

purpose and need; general design parameters (e.g. route, length of road segment, lane width, paving depth); and potential environmental impacts and permitting requirements. A preliminary budget is developed which includes the cost of design, and construction as well as environmental permitting and mitigation.

Draft project summaries are reviewed at Biennial Review Meetings in each region for preliminary scoping of the project by federal and state resource agencies and local municipalities. Based on this feedback, a final project summary is prepared which includes a recommended level of environmental analysis (i.e., categorical exemption/exclusion, environmental assessment, or environmental impact statement).

From the list of benefit/cost prioritized projects, the Transportation Commission selects a mix of projects providing the greatest net benefit to transportation users. This prioritized program is submitted biennially to the Legislature for funding authorization and is included in the STIP.

WSDOT's Program Management Office is responsible for overseeing this phase. For details, see WSDOT's web site:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/>

Click on Site Index, then P, then Planning and Capital Program Management, Transportation Planning.

Or by direct link:

 <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/ppsc/planning/>

300.02 Environmental Issues in Programming and Project Definition

During this phase, potential projects are reviewed to determine potential environmental impacts, and to classify them for NEPA/SEPA purposes. This analysis is done during

* Web sites and navigation referenced in this section are subject to change. For the most current links, please refer to the online version of the EPM, available through the EAO home page: <http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/eesc/environmental/>

programming and project definition in order to anticipate environmental issues as early in the process as possible, and to factor the costs of environmental review into the project budget.

These procedures are described in [Section 320](#). See [Exhibit 320-1](#) through [320-3](#) for copies of the Project Definition, Design Decision Summary and Environmental Review Summary.

300.03 Exhibits

None.